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### THREE DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS

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In the "goodly fellowship" of the theological teachers at whose feet it was my privilege to sit from 1881 to 1885, first in New York, and then in Leipzig, there were three—if I pass by those who still labor and are widely honored—to whose scholarship and character I am sure that I am deeply indebted.

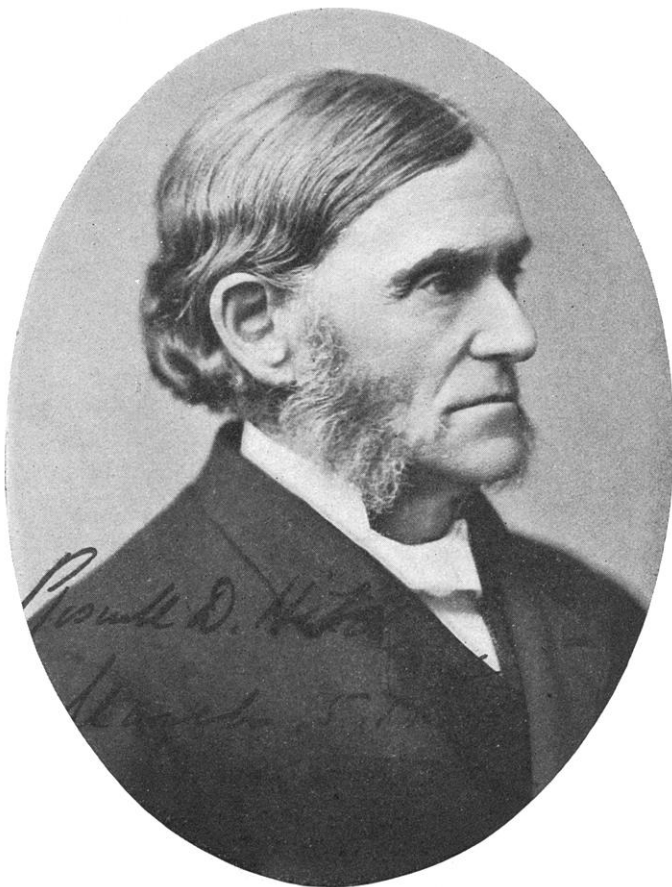
One of these three had extraordinary talent as a teacher. What he saw of truth he saw clearly and was able to set forth impressively. He had a remarkable faculty for picturesque, memorable utterance. One might have said to him what Tennyson is reported to have said to John Richard Green: "You're vivid as lightning."

The second of the three was in intellect and method a typical theologian of the old school, a worthy successor of Owen and Pearson, Bellarmin and Turretin. The chain of his logic was strongly welded, and was probably capable—had the premises been sound—of sustaining any of his doctrinal conclusions. He used the Scripture as did the Westminster divines and John Calvin; that is, without discrimination. It was all equally inspired and equally good. A word of the young Elihu or of the forty-fifth psalm was as authoritative as a statement of Paul, and the teaching of Paul was a source of doctrine of equal rank with the gospel itself.

The third one of those now in my mind was a master of Old Testament exegesis, a man of great learning in the department of biblical Hebrew and the later Jewish literature, and the translator of the New Testament into Hebrew—a piece of missionary work which has been greatly blessed. He was conservative in scholarship, but a conservative in motion, thus differing from the second, who was a conservative at rest.

These three men, thus briefly characterized, were Dr. Roswell D. Hitchcock, professor of church history at Union Theological Seminary for thirty-two years, who died in 1887; Dr. W. G. T. Shedd,

professor of theology at Union Seminary also for thirty-one years, who died in 1894; and Dr. Franz Delitzsch, professor at Leipzig University for twenty-three years, after having held professorships at Rostock and Erlangen for twenty-one years, who died in 1890.



PROFESSOR ROSWELL D. HITCHCOCK

Dr. Shedd was sixty years old, Dr. Hitchcock sixty-three, and Dr. Delitzsch seventy, when I became their pupil; but all were full of vigor and at the height of their intellectual power. The instruction that they gave was the mature product of many years of study, and was reinforced by a long Christian experience of life.

Dr. Hitchcock gave me my first clear knowledge of the life of Jesus and its place in the history of the world. His lectures on this subject formed the first part of his course on church history, and were, I think, the most valuable part, though the entire course was brilliant and suggestive. They were characterized by originality in the presentation of facts rather than by original investigation of the sources. It is a cause of regret that he did not put these lectures in shape for publication. But he published nothing, I believe, in the department where he labored so long. The channel of influence that he chose was mainly that of personal contact, and by this he surely sent out a strong current. For all who were once his pupils I think he is counted one of those

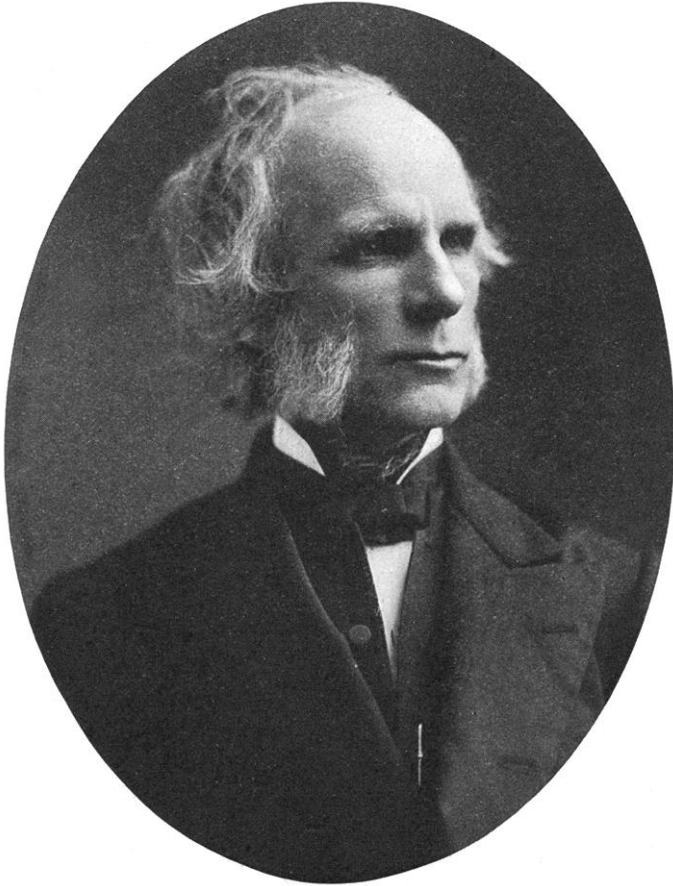
"immortal dead who live again  
In minds made better by their presence; live  
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,  
And with their mild persistence urge man's search  
To vaster issues."

The quality of Dr. Hitchcock's faculty of expression, to which reference has been made, may be suggested by a single quotation from one of his sermons:

These angels are the Imperial Guard, doing easy duty at home. We are the Tenth Legion, marching in from the swamps and forests of the far-off frontiers, scarred and battered, but victorious over death and sin.

Of Dr. Shedd's influence it is somewhat more difficult to speak. The beauty of his spirit at all times, the dignity and gentleness of his character, and his prayers in the chapel worship attracted me as strongly as his system of theology repelled me. I admired and revered the man, and always shall; but the theologian seemed to belong to a different and far-off age, and helped me chiefly by showing what I could not believe. His theology, from its doctrine of God to that of the last things, impressed me then very much as I am now impressed by the reading of Calvin's *Institutes* or the *Longer Catechism*. It was forcible; it sought to honor God; it contained much truth of experience; and yet, as a whole, especially in its Christology, it did not seem to have a vital connection with the Scripture revelation. No part of it seemed to spring clearly and fully out of the depths of the Bible. Nor is it strange that it

impressed some of us pupils in this way. In the biblical departments we were learning to interpret the Bible in a grammatical and historical manner, and it was impossible to go from this sort of work into the theological lecture-room without being conscious



PROFESSOR W. G. T. SHEDD

of a pretty violent intellectual wrench. The two methods of treating the Bible were plainly incompatible one with the other. It was the conflict of science with theology all within the four walls of the seminary; for the philological and historical study of the Bible was scientific, and I think most of us were on the side of science.

This situation was serious, and resulted now and then in the loss of a valuable man to the ministry. And it was not alone at Union Seminary that this situation existed, nor was it ended twenty years ago. The same theology is still taught in various places, and wherever it is taught it is necessary that the Bible should be used in the old way. Not otherwise can the doctrines be furnished with biblical support. It seems a matter of great importance to the church that the departments in the seminaries should be harmonized by a common method of investigation, as has, indeed, been done to some extent. We ought not to have scientific methods in the biblical work, and traditionalism in the department of theology.

But to return to Dr. Shedd. If anyone was fitted to make the inherited system of doctrines convincing and satisfactory, he was. He was master of the system, and presented it in a most Christianly manner. But the sappers and miners had been at work too long. The day was passing, or had already passed, when the Bible could be used without regard to its historical development. And so the work of Dr. Shedd was not of the easiest. He fell on evil times for the maintenance, intact, of the doctrines which had been handed down from ancient generations. The "old order" was changing, and giving place to a new one, whereby, we trust, the truth is being made more clear.

From the biblical work at Union Seminary to the biblical work at the University of Leipzig was an easy transition. The method and spirit were the same in both places. In the summer of 1883 Dr. Delitzsch had already passed his seventieth birthday, but his face was still fresh, his step quick, and his capacity for work great. There were yet seven years of fruitful labor before him.

The hospitality of Dr. Delitzsch, as of other famous German professors, toward students who came from foreign lands was naturally quite marked. Soon after reaching Leipzig he asked me to an afternoon walk, in the course of which we had coffee in one of the numerous "summer gardens" of the city, and thereafter I saw him a number of times in his own home. He was always accessible and ready with kindly counsel. I was attracted by the simplicity of his life and of his Christian faith. The former of these features at least I found characteristic of all the German people whom I met, and it

seemed to me a higher type of life than was common among the educated and well-to-do classes at home.

Dr. Delitzsch's study was plain, even plainer than those of theological students in America. There were no upholstered chairs;



PROFESSOR FRANZ DELITZSCH  
[By the courtesy of Mr. John C. Curtiss]

there was no carpet. The long straight-backed sofa had no cushions on it. The article of furniture that was most used was a large painted desk with slanting top, at which Dr. Delitzsch stood when studying and writing. His library was across the hall, and was smaller, I should say, than those of many professors among us.

Dr. Delitzsch was fond of flowers, very frequently carrying one in his hand or wearing one in his coat, and in the most satisfactory portrait of him which I have seen he holds a white flower, perhaps a tuberose. It was a saying of his that flowers are a relic of Paradise lost, and that delight in flowers is a foretaste of Paradise regained. It always seemed to me fitting that he should have a fresh, beautiful flower in his hand or somewhere about him, for it was a symbol of his blameless life.

As I think of Dr. Delitzsch now after the lapse of twenty years, though appreciating the intellectual stimulus and the solid information which I derived from his lectures, it is plain that his deepest and most lasting influence upon me is the influence of character. It is his personality that I still feel, and therefore his face, as I see it in memory or in a photograph, moves me more than one of his books. So it was, I suppose, with the men who had been personally acquainted with Jesus. To the end of their days, that which kept the fire burning in the soul, that which made them strong and patient, hopeful and daring, was the force of his personality, the contact of his life with theirs. And in this old truth, perpetually illustrated for me by the memory of Dr. Delitzsch among others, there lies, I think, a message for all teachers of theology in this age when many consciously, and more unconsciously, are seeking after a theology which they can heartily hold. Truth is great, but character is greater. And here, in that which is greatest, all the men of whom I have spoken are close of kin. Our "little systems" of thought, it is true, have their day, and cease to be; but the day of a pure and noble character has no end. The "communion of saints" is not usually in the realm of opinion, but rather in that of love and endeavor. These three men, though differing in many points—as, for example, in their attitude toward the Bible and toward theological progress—all alike, by the silent influence of what they were, powerfully commended the simplest and deepest truths of the gospel.